

*Wheat Sales*

**An hon. Member:** Or an NDP minister.

**Mr. Knight:** —is what hurts the Canadian Wheat Board. There is another program which has nothing to do with the Wheat Board and which has been mentioned in the debate. It is the so-called two-price system for wheat. This program was undertaken as a result of a decision made by the minister. It is not really a two-price system for wheat; it is the old acreage payment. The right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) advocated an acreage payment once in a while, I believe.

**An hon. member:** Every other year.

**Mr. Horner (Crowfoot):** Not with the farmers' money.

**Mr. Knight:** That is right, not with the farmers' money. But this two-price system is nothing more than an acreage payment. It is based on all six grains up to a maximum number of acres, on an acreage basis. It is not based on a bushel of wheat. It is, in a sense, a subsidy. In terms of the policy enunciated by the minister, who is not here right now—

**Mr. Lang:** I suppose the hon. member cannot see.

**Mr. Knight:** Oh, he is back. I welcome him back.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Knight:** Farmers in my area are getting \$1.95½ a bushel, basis Thunder Bay, for their wheat—wheat used domestically.

**Mr. Korchinski:** Thanks for the support, Bill.

**Mr. Knight:** You are welcome, Stan.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I think the element of private conversation which seems to have entered the hon. member's speech is out of order. I would ask him to proceed in a normal way.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Let us have normal order, then.

**Mr. Knight:** Or maybe continue in an abnormal way. Farmers are receiving \$1.95½, when the international price is ranging anywhere from \$2.68 a bushel. The wheat farmer is therefore subsidizing the consumer, and the acreage payment of between \$1.95½ and \$3 has really no relation to a true two-price system. In my view a two-price system for wheat should be related to wheat. We should move into the area of guaranteed minimum prices for the other grains as well. To alleviate some of the concern felt by those in the northern parts of Saskatchewan, I say it should be on the basis, for example, of the first 2,000 bushels. The minister in charge of the Wheat Board sent out a questionnaire to western farmers in which he loaded the answers.

**An hon. Member:** You mean the questions, surely.

**Mr. Knight:** He loaded the answers that had to be given. Everybody had to opt for acreage payments, the way the questionnaire was written. When I pointed out what he was offering to the people of Assiniboia and I asked

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whether they wanted it on the first 2,000 bushels or strictly on bushels in the constituency, the reaction of the farmers—when they were given a clear, concise choice—was to opt for the first 2,000 bushels. They were very heavily in favour of that. That kind of decision has to be taken when making policy, not by a motion put in this House which if it were passed tonight would mean we could not pass the crop insurance amendments to reduce premiums for the western farmers, which would mean there would be no payment of 30 cents a bushel talked about in the motion because this Parliament would be brought to an end. How can one support a motion attacking the Wheat Board when sales have never been higher and when the board is doing a good job, in spite of the minister who is in charge of it?

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Knight:** It is the most ridiculous idea I have heard in a long time, and I do not think the Tory party—

**An hon. Member:** Six o'clock.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** May I ask the hon. member if he has finished his speech or whether he merely wishes to call it six o'clock.

**Mr. Knight:** Six o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

#### AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

**Mr. Knight:** Mr. Speaker, at six o'clock I was enunciating my position on the motion of the Conservative Party relating to the Canadian Wheat Board. I should like to deal with two matters of concern to me. I raise these issues because of my respect for the hon. member for Crowfoot and some of the ideas that he has put forward.

I am concerned about that part of his speech which referred to long-term commitments to our wheat customers. I am very surprised that a member of a major party in this country would take the kind of critical position the hon. member took, if I interpreted his remarks correctly, on long-term commitments to our known customers. Above all else, the Canadian Wheat Board needs committed customers who will buy our grain. My farmers want to know who is going to buy their wheat and whether we have any committed customers. We are lucky to have the U.S.S.R., the People's Republic of China and some other countries buying our grain, and we are glad to meet our commitments. I think the hon. member's comments about our making long-term commitments with such countries carry with them very serious implications. After all, these commitments are the very foundation on which we build sales and these customers are extremely important.

I see the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) has just entered the chamber and joined us and I hope he listens well. I understand he wants to be in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board. He always wants to be in charge of the Wheat Board when things are going well. So, as I say, I